

# Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program

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***FY 2007 Request for Applications***

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: January 25, 2007**



**U.S. Department of Agriculture**



**Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service**

**COOPERATIVE STATE RESEARCH, EDUCATION, AND EXTENSION SERVICE;  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

**HISPANIC-SERVING INSTITUTIONS EDUCATION GRANTS PROGRAM**

**INITIAL ANNOUNCEMENT**

**CATALOG OF FEDERAL DOMESTIC ASSISTANCE:** This program is listed in the Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance under 10.223, Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program.

**DATES:** Applications must be received by close of business (COB) on January 25, 2007 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline normally will not be considered for funding. Comments regarding this request for applications (RFA) are requested within six months from the issuance of this notice. Comments received after this date will be considered to the extent practicable.

**STAKEHOLDER INPUT:** The Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) is requesting comments regarding this RFA from any interested party. These comments will be considered in the development of the next RFA for the program. Such comments will be used to meet the requirements of section 103(c)(2) of the Agricultural Research, Extension, and Education Reform Act of 1998 (7 U.S.C. 7613(c)(2)). This section requires the Secretary to solicit and consider input on a current RFA from persons who conduct or use agricultural research, education and extension for use in formulating future RFA's for competitive programs. Comments should be submitted as provided for in the DATES portion of this Notice.

Written stakeholder comments should be submitted by mail to: Policy, Oversight, and Funds Management Branch; Office of Extramural Programs; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; STOP 2299; 1400 Independence Avenue, SW; Washington, DC 20250-2299; or via e-mail to: [RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:RFP-OEP@csrees.usda.gov). (This e-mail address is intended only for receiving comments regarding this RFA and not requesting information or forms.) In your comments, please state that you are responding to the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program RFA.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:** CSREES requests applications for the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program (HSI) for fiscal year (FY) 2007 to promote and strengthen the ability of Hispanic-Serving Institutions to carry out higher education programs that attract, retain, and graduate outstanding students capable of enhancing the nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional work force. CSREES anticipates the total amount available for support of the HSI in FY 2007 will be approximately \$6.6 million.

This notice identifies the objectives for HSI projects, the eligibility criteria for projects and applicants, and the application forms and associated instructions needed to apply for an HSI grant. CSREES additionally requests stakeholder input from any interested party for use in the development of the next RFA for this program.

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## **PART I—FUNDING OPPORTUNITY DESCRIPTION**

### **A. Legislative Authority and Background**

This program is administered under the provisions of section 1455 of the National Agricultural Research, Extension, and Teaching Policy Act of 1977, as amended (NARETPA) (7 U.S.C. 3241) pursuant to section 815 of Public Law 104-127. Section 1455 of NARETPA authorizes the Secretary of Agriculture to make competitive grants to Hispanic-Serving Institutions for the purpose of promoting and strengthening the ability of Hispanic-Serving Institutions to carry out education, applied research, and related community development programs.

For this program, the term "food and agricultural sciences" means basic, applied, and developmental teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, physical and social sciences, or rural economic, community, or business development, including related disciplines as defined in section 1404(8) of NARETPA.

### **B. Purpose and Priorities**

The Department of Agriculture is designated as the lead Federal Agency for higher education in the food and agricultural sciences. In this context, the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) has specific responsibility to initiate and support projects to strengthen higher education teaching programs in the food and agricultural sciences.

The Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program is a competitive grants program intended to: promote and strengthen the ability of Hispanic-Serving Institutions to carry out higher education programs in the food and agricultural sciences; attract outstanding students from underrepresented groups; and produce graduates capable of enhancing the Nation's food and agricultural scientific and professional work force. Applications for this program may be submitted by a single Hispanic-Serving Institution or multiple Hispanic-Serving Institutions with a lead institution. The activities of a collaboration of Hispanic-Serving Institutions must support and enhance educational equity for underrepresented students. Grants under this program will be awarded to those applicants addressing the following four Priority Areas:

- (1) strengthen institutional educational capacities including libraries, curriculum, faculty, scientific instrumentation, instruction delivery systems, and student recruitment and retention, in order to respond to identified State, regional, national, or international educational needs in the food and agricultural sciences;
- (2) attract and support undergraduate and graduate students from underrepresented groups in order to prepare them for careers related to the food, agricultural, and natural resource systems of the United States, beginning with the mentoring of students at the high school level and continuing with the provision of financial support for students through their attainment of a doctoral degree; and
- (3) facilitate cooperative initiatives between two or more Hispanic-Serving Institutions, or between Hispanic-Serving Institutions and units of State government or the private

sector, to maximize the development and use of resources, such as faculty, facilities, and equipment, to improve food and agricultural sciences teaching programs.

CSREES encourages innovative proposals with the potential for national impact to serve as models for other institutions.

Applicants must address all of the following four items:

1. Address how proposals that support any of the six, current USDA Strategic Goals or associated 17 CSREES Strategic Objectives (see complete list in Part VIII, E. Definitions):
  - (a) enhance international competitiveness of American agriculture;
  - (b) enhance the competitiveness and sustainability of rural farm economies;
  - (c) support increased economic opportunities and improved quality of life in rural America;
  - (d) enhance protection and safety of the Nation's agriculture and food supply;
  - (e) improve the Nation's nutrition and health; and
  - (f) protect and enhance the Nation's natural resource base and environment.
2. Address at least one of the Educational Need Areas (described in Part I, C.1.), and explain how this Educational Need Area supports Item 1. listed above;
3. Address at least one of the Priority Areas (described in Part I, B.); and
4. Document how project accomplishments (products, results, impacts, etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. Applicants are encouraged to develop a project web page as part of their dissemination activities.

In addition, applicants are strongly encouraged to find a sponsoring USDA agency such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development Agency (RD), the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Economic Research Service (ERS), Forest Service (FS), Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) to leverage grant funds and/or contribute towards overall goals and objectives.

## **C. Program Area Description**

### **1. Educational Need Areas**

HSI Projects should focus on one or more of the Educational Need Areas listed below. If more than one Educational Need Area is evident in your application, please list, in the Project Narrative, the most representative area first. (See Part IV, B.1.b.(E).)

**Applicants should propose to reform mainstream instructional practices and address future needs within the food and agricultural sciences system. Applicants should consider projects that: reshape curricula for a changing agricultural system (Need Area (a)); prepare faculty to teach a changing student clientele (Need Area (b)); prepare academic leadership for sustainable change (see Need Area (c) below); develop student experiential learning opportunities for underrepresented students (Need Areas (d) or (e)); or recruit and retain underrepresented students (Need Area (f)).**

Educational Need Areas for FY 2007 are listed below. All these Need Areas present opportunities for USDA collaboration and involvement.

**(a) Curricula Design, Materials Development, and Library Resources (including development of courses of study and degree programs).**

The purpose of this Need Area is to promote new and improved curricula, materials, and library resources to increase the quality of, and continuously renew, the academic programs of Hispanic-Serving Institutions in the food and agricultural sciences. The overall objective is to stimulate the development and facilitate the use of exemplary education models and materials that incorporate the most recent advances in subject matter, research on teaching and learning theory, and instructional technology and demonstrate the benefit of new technologies. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: the development of courses of study, degree programs, and instructional materials; the use of new approaches to the study of traditional subjects; the introduction of new subjects, or new applications of knowledge pertaining to the food and agricultural sciences; or the acquisition of books and journals relating to the food and agricultural sciences.

**(b) Faculty Preparation and Enhancement for Teaching.**

The purpose of this Need Area is to advance faculty development in the areas of teaching competency and leadership, subject matter expertise, or student recruitment and advising skills. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: obtaining experience with recent developments and new applications in a field, expanding competence in innovative technologies and new methods of instruction delivery or student advising skills, or pursuing further graduate-level study in a field related to the food and agricultural sciences. Each faculty recipient of support for developmental activities must be an "eligible participant" as defined in the definitions section of this RFA.

For example, CSREES requests the submission of proposals for coordinating the recruitment and development of faculty/student teams to participate in research activities at host research institutions and laboratories. The HSI applicant will administer the grant project in coordination with research staff at USDA and/or other agencies.

**(c) Instruction Delivery Systems.**

The purpose of this Need Area is to encourage the use of alternative methods of delivering instruction to enhance the quality, effectiveness, and cost efficiency of teaching programs. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: incorporating alternative instructional methodologies that respond to differences in student learning styles; inter-institutional collaborations that deliver instruction in ways that maximize program quality and reduce unnecessary duplication; and consideration and implementation of innovative instructional techniques, methodologies, and delivery systems in response to advances in knowledge and technology.

**(d) Scientific Instrumentation for Teaching.**

The purpose of this Need Area is to provide students in science-oriented courses the necessary experience with suitable, up-to-date equipment in order to involve them in work central to scientific understanding and progress. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: acquiring new, state-of-the-art instructional laboratory and other classroom equipment to help assure the achievement and maintenance of outstanding food and agricultural sciences higher education programs; upgrading existing equipment; or replacing non-functional or clearly obsolete equipment.

**(e) Student Experiential Learning.**

The purpose of this Need Area is to further the development of student scientific and professional competencies through experiential learning programs outside the formal classroom that provide students with opportunities to solve complex problems in the context of real-world situations. Proposals may emphasize knowledge and applications that provide student graduates with skills desired by employees, but are not limited to: preparing future graduates to advance knowledge and technology, enhance quality of life, conserve resources, and revitalize the Nation's economic competitiveness; advancing student decision-making and communication skills; and improving real-life technological expertise. Applicants are encouraged to find a sponsoring USDA agency and/or private sector organization to assist in the development of these student experiential learning activities.

**(f) Student Recruitment and Retention (including student financial assistance).**

The purpose of this Need Area is to strengthen **underrepresented** student recruitment and retention programs in order to promote and strengthen the Nation's scientific, professional, and technical work force in the food and agricultural sciences. Proposals may emphasize, but are not limited to: supplementing efforts to attract increased numbers of outstanding academic students to prepare for careers as food and agricultural scientists, professionals, and technicians; promoting opportunities for underrepresented groups to engage in a robust exchange of ideas and a more effective use of the full breadth of the Nation's intellectual resources; or mentoring programs and other initiatives (including financial assistance) to attract and retain outstanding students.

Projects addressing the targeted Need Areas above (a-f) area must demonstrate how proposed activities will provide more efficient and effective strategies than existing institutional programs, to increase both the quality and quantity of targeted students.

Applicants may request funding (up to \$50,000) to provide financial assistance to one student beyond their participation in the project. For example, a student completing a two-year degree could be sponsored to complete a four-year degree or a student completing a four-year degree could be sponsored to complete a master's degree. **Two year colleges should form an articulation agreement allowing the student to complete a bachelor's or professional degree at the selected granting institution. Students graduating with a bachelor's degree should be linked to a graduate program. Funds could cover tuition, books, a stipend, a computer, travel to one professional conference in their field of study, and travel to one-week leadership training.** The student stipend amount selected by the applicant should be comparable to the current stipend at the institution to be attended by the student. The student should be selected within the first 12 months of the award and encouraged to complete funded school work within the first 54 months of the award date (4 1/2 years).

Each student recipient must be enrolled at an eligible institution and meet the requirement of an "eligible participant" as defined in the definitions section of this solicitation.

Applicants should also consider requesting \$25,000 to sponsor developmental training for current faculty or administrators at Hispanic-Serving Institutions that would address one or all the USDA Strategic Goals (see complete list in Part VIII, E. Definitions) with the purpose of building their capacity and fostering linkages with USDA agencies. Applicants requesting support for this training should attach a three-page project prospectus to their application. (See Part IV, B.1.d.). One institution will be funded to complete this leadership training. Funding for this activity is not renewable. This activity should be submitted and will be funded as part of an HSI grant and not as a separate grant award.

## **2. Disciplines and Subject Matter Areas Supported**

Eligible institutions may, within the Educational Need Areas targeted for support, propose projects in any Discipline(s) or subject matter area(s) of the food and agricultural sciences as noted below:

General Food and Agricultural Sciences; Agribusiness Management and Marketing (includes Agricultural Economics); Agricultural/Biological Engineering; Agricultural Social Sciences (includes Agricultural Education, Agricultural Communications, and Rural Sociology); Animal Sciences; Aquaculture; Conservation and Renewable Natural Resources (includes Forestry and Ecology/Wetlands); Entomology, Animal; Entomology, Plant; Environmental Sciences/Management; Food Science/Technology and Manufacturing (including Food Safety); Human Nutrition; Human Sciences/Family and Consumer Sciences (excludes Human Nutrition); International Education/Research (enhancement of U.S. programs); Plant Sciences and Horticulture (including Turf Sciences); Related Biological Sciences (includes General/Basic Biotechnology, Biochemistry, and Microbiology); Soil Sciences; Veterinary Medicine/Science; Water Science/Water Resources; (including Water Quality and Watershed Management); and "other" relevant and subject matter areas.

## **3. Levels of Study Supported**

Applications must be directed to formal, for-credit academic programs at the undergraduate and/or graduate levels of study.

#### **4. Project Scope**

A proposed Regular or Collaboration project may address a single Educational Need Area or multiple Educational Need Areas, may focus on the undergraduate or graduate levels of study, and may focus on a single discipline or subject matter area or multiple disciplines or subject matter areas, in any combination. **Projects must address any of the six USDA's Strategic Goals or associated 17 CSREES Strategic Objectives (see definition in Part VIII, E.).**

Finally, grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the project's outcomes and impacts. Up to 10 percent of grant funds may be used for this purpose.

#### **5. Institutional Collaboration**

Applicants may submit Regular Project proposals and Collaboration Project proposals. Applicants submitting Regular Project proposals may partner with one other eligible institution. (See Part II, C. Project Types.) Proposals should be designed to: (1) increase the pool of highly-qualified students from minority groups that are traditionally underrepresented in careers in the food and agricultural sciences; (2) make more scientific knowledge readily available to the Hispanic-Serving Institutions; (3) provide technical and financial assistance through grant and scholarship programs to recruit and retain talented students and faculty; and (4) provide support for utilizing and developing the professional faculty and staff as a source of expertise deemed important to the CSREES mission.

In addition, applicants are encouraged to find a sponsoring USDA agency such as the Farm Service Agency (FSA), Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS), Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS), Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Rural Development Agency (RD), the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS), Economic Research Service (ERS), Forest Service (FS), Grain Inspection, Packers and Stockyard Administration (GIPSA), Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), Risk Management Agency (RMA), Agricultural Research Service (ARS), and the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS). Examples of collaborative activities with USDA could include internships, USDA Career Days, Hispanic-Serving Institution student visits or tours, and USDA staff presentations to students and faculty.

#### **6. Project Director's Meeting and Dissemination Plan**

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend a new Project Director's meeting and at least one national Project Directors' meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. The purpose of the new Project Director's meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and future directions for education reform. The national Project Director's meeting will build on the new Project Director's meeting and will also provide opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results.

Applicants must include in the project's Dissemination Plan a description of how the applicant plans to communicate project accomplishments (products, results and impacts, etc.) to the

broadest extent throughout the academic community. This may include educational journals or other professional discipline publications, a website, and presentations at regional or national conferences and workshops, including the HSI's Project Director's Conference.

## **PART II—AWARD INFORMATION**

### **A. Available Funding**

There is no commitment by USDA to fund any particular application or to make a specific number of awards. CSREES anticipates that approximately \$6.6 million will be available to fund applications in FY 2007.

### **B. Types of Applications**

In FY 2007, applications may be submitted to the HSI Program as one of the following two types of requests:

**(1) New application.** This is a project application that has not been previously submitted to the HSI Program. All new applications will be reviewed competitively using the selection process and evaluation criteria described in Part V—Application Review Requirements.

**(3) Resubmitted application.** This is an application that had previously been submitted to the HSI Program but not funded. Project Directors (PDs) must respond to the previous review panel summary (see Response to Previous Review, Part IV, B.1). Resubmitted applications must be received by the relevant due dates, will be evaluated in competition with other pending applications in the appropriate area to which they are assigned, and will be reviewed according to the same evaluation criteria as new applications.

### **C. Project Types**

This competitive grants program awards funds to Hispanic-Serving Institutions for the purpose of promoting and strengthening their abilities to carry out higher education programs in the food and agricultural sciences. Only eligible institutions may be the direct recipients of grants under this program and grant efforts should be dedicated to supporting the objectives of USDA in food and agricultural sciences.

There are two types of project proposals: **Regular** and **Collaboration**.

- **Regular project** proposal is a proposal for a project where the applicant (and one other Hispanic-Serving Institution) will be the sole entity(s) involved in the execution of the project.
- **Collaboration project** proposal is a proposal for a project in which a group of three or more Hispanic-Serving Institutions form a cooperative arrangement for the purpose of carrying out common objective(s) on the group's behalf for the purpose of promoting and strengthening their abilities to carry out higher education programs in the food and agricultural sciences. These Hispanic-Serving Institutions will build linkages to maximize the use of limited resources by generating a critical mass of expertise to address an activity focused on one of more targeted Educational Area(s), increasing cost effectiveness, achieving economies of scale, strengthening the scope and quality of a project's impact, and reaching a larger number of institutions.

## **1. Application Submission Limitations**

For the FY 2007 program, an applicant may not submit as a lead institution more than five applications.

## **2. Project Duration**

For the FY 2007 program, eligible institutions may submit Regular or Collaboration Project applications, as defined in this RFA, for project periods of 24 to 36 months duration.

## **3. Award Size**

### **a. Regular Project**

For the FY 2007 program, an applicant may request up to \$250,000 (total, not per year) for a Regular Project. An additional \$50,000 may be requested to support one underrepresented student, thereby increasing the total grant award size to \$300,000 including indirect costs. Note that the funds requested do not have to be divided equally between institutions or among project years.

### **b. Collaboration Project**

Collaboration proposals will be funded up to \$450,000 (total, not per year) and would require the participation of three or more eligible institutions. A Collaboration proposal may also request the additional \$50,000 to support an underrepresented student thereby increasing the Collaboration proposal maximum to \$500,000 including indirect costs. Activities supported should benefit all or most collaboration members. Up to two collaboration proposals are expected to be funded per year. Distribution of funds among collaboration members will be decided by the applicant organizations. Nevertheless, the lead institution must receive at least 25 percent of the award and no more than 75 percent of the funds awarded.

## **PART III—ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION**

### **A. Eligible Applicants**

Awards may only be made to public or other non-profit Hispanic-Serving Institutions as defined in the definitions section of this RFA. To be eligible for competitive consideration for an award under this program, a Hispanic-Serving Institution must at the time of application certify that it has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students. By submitting an application, the applicant organization certifies that it is eligible to receive funding under this program.

Note: If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must submit a letter (as part of the Budget Justification, see Part IV, B.2.) stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by a representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address. Both the fiscal agent and the applicant school or institution must submit complete management information (see Part VI, B.). Nevertheless, the legal recipient of the award must be a Hispanic-Serving Institution.

#### **1. Branch Institutions**

For the purposes of this program, the individual branches of a State university system or public system of higher education that are separately accredited as degree granting institutions are treated as separate institutions eligible for awards. Accreditation must be by an agency or association recognized by the Secretary, U.S. Department of Education. Institutions also must be legally authorized to offer at least a two-year program of study creditable toward an associate's or bachelor's degree. Separate branches or campuses of a college or university that are not individually accredited as degree granting institutions are not treated as separate institutions.

#### **2. Subcontracts**

Award recipients may subcontract to organizations not eligible to apply provided such organizations are necessary for the conduct of the project.

### **B. Cost Sharing or Matching**

CSREES does not require matching support for this program and matching resources will not be factored into the review process.

## PART IV—APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

### A. Address to Request Application Package

Only electronic applications may be submitted via Grants.gov to CSREES in response to this RFA.

Prior to preparing an application, it is suggested that the PD/PI first contact an Authorized Representative (AR) to determine if the organization is prepared to submit electronic applications through Grant.gov. If the organization is not prepared, the AR should see [http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get\\_registered.jsp](http://www.grants.gov/applicants/get_registered.jsp) for steps for preparing to submit applications through Grants.gov.

The steps to access application materials are as follows:

1. Download and install PureEdge Viewer, a small, free program that provides access to the grant application. See [http://www.grants.gov/resources/download\\_software.jsp#pureedge](http://www.grants.gov/resources/download_software.jsp#pureedge).
2. The application package must be obtained via Grants.gov, go to <http://www.grants.gov>, click on “Apply for Grants” in the left-hand column, click on “**Step 1: Download a Grant Application Package and Instructions**,” enter the funding opportunity number “USDA-CSREES-HSI-000321” in the appropriate box and click “Download Package.” From the search results, click “Download” to access the application package.

Contained within the application package is the “[CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide: A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov](#).” This Guide contains an introduction and general Grants.gov instructions, information about how to use a Grant Application Package in Grants.gov, and instructions on how to complete the application forms.

**If assistance is needed to access the application package** (e.g., downloading or navigating PureEdge forms, using PureEdge with a Macintosh computer), refer to resources available on the Grants.gov Web site first (<http://grants.gov/>). Grants.gov assistance is also available as follows:

- Grants.gov customer support  
Toll Free: 1-800-518-4726  
Business Hours: M-F 7:00 am – 9 pm Eastern Standard Time  
Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov)

See <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/electronic.html> for additional resources for applying electronically.

### B. Content and Form of Application Submission

Electronic applications should be prepared following Part V and VI of the document entitled “[A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov](#).” This guide is part of the corresponding application package (see Section A. of this Part). The following is **additional information** needed in order to prepare an application in response to this RFA. If

there is discrepancy between the two documents, the information contained in this RFA is overriding.

**Note the attachment requirements (e.g., portable document format) in Part III section 3. of the Guide.**

1. R&R Other Project Information Form

a. Project Summary/Abstract (Field 6. on the Form). List the project's intended primary Educational Need Area (from Part I, C.1.); and the primary Discipline (from Part I, C.2.). Briefly summarize the project objectives and include all measurable project outcomes. The summary should also include the relevance of the project to the HSI Program Goals.

b. Project Narrative (Field 7. on the Form).

PLEASE NOTE: The Project Narrative shall not exceed 20 pages of written text and up to a maximum of five additional pages for figures and tables. This maximum (25 pages) has been established to ensure fair and equitable competition. Reviewers will not be required to review material in excess of this limit.

The Project Narrative must include all of the following: (Note: To facilitate proposal review and evaluation, include the following, underlined wording as headings in the Project Narrative, followed by the applicant's response for each item.)

(A) Potential for advancing the quality of education; Significance of the Problem:

- (1) Institutional Long-range Goals. Demonstrate how the institution attributes a high priority to the project, discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals, explain how the project will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives, or how the project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.
- (2) Identification of Educational Problem(s) and Project Impact. Clearly identify and explain how the proposed project will address at least one of the Educational Need Areas described in Part I, C.1. Briefly explain the project's anticipated, overall impact on improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences education. Also, explain how the project supports any of the six current USDA Strategic Goals or 17 associated CSREES Strategic Objectives (see Definitions, Part VIII, E., for complete list).
- (3) Project Justification. Clearly state the specific instructional problem or opportunity to be addressed. Describe how and by whom the focus and scope of the project were determined. Summarize the body of knowledge justifying the need for the proposed project. Discuss how the project will be of value at the State, regional, national, or international level(s). Describe any ongoing or recently completed significant activities related to the proposed project for which previous funding was received under this program.

(4) Innovation. Describe the proposal's creative approach to improving the quality of food and agricultural sciences education, solving a higher education problem, or advancing educational equity.

(5) Multidisciplinary and/or Problem-based Focus. Indicate how the project is relevant to multiple disciplines in the food and agricultural sciences education, or with other academic curricula. Also, discuss whether the project may be adapted by, or serve as a model for other institutions.

(B) Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages:

(1) Objectives. Cite and discuss the specific project objectives to be accomplished. Performance-based objectives are recommended.

(2) Plan of Operation and Methodology. Describe procedures for accomplishing the objectives of the project. Describe plans for management of the project to ensure its proper and efficient administration. Describe the way in which resources and personnel will be used to conduct the project.

(3) Timetable. Provide a timetable for conducting the project. Identify all important project milestones and dates as they relate to project start-up, execution, evaluation, dissemination, and close-out.

(4) Products, Results and Measurable Outcomes. Explain the expected products and results, and their potential impact (outcome) on strengthening food and agricultural sciences education in the United States. (Important Note: "Products" may be actual items or services acquired with funds, e.g., "...developed three, new Web-based courses containing supplemental materials"; "Results" are intended or unintended consequences of the project, e.g., "...additional course materials now available online to reinforce student learning during non-classroom hours"; and "Outcomes/Impacts" are a measure of the results by comparing what might have happened in the absence of the funded project, e.g., "...an observed, overall increase in student learning based upon 8% higher average test scores of those students who both attended class and used the supplemental, web-based course materials".)

(5) Evaluation Plans. Provide a methodology and implementation plan for evaluating the accomplishment of stated products, results and measurable outcomes during the project. Indicate the criteria, and corresponding weight of each, to be used in the evaluation process, describe any data to be collected and analyzed, and explain the methodology that will be used to determine the extent to which the needs underlying the project are met. Demonstrate that the project's impact on improving education will be evaluated. Grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the project's outcomes and impacts.

(6) Dissemination Plans. The proposal must document how project accomplishments (products, results and impacts...etc.) will be published or otherwise disseminated to the broadest extent throughout the academic community. Discuss the institution's commitment to disseminate project results and products. Identify target audiences and

explain methods of communication. Consider distributing materials to other Hispanic-Serving Institutions, especially HSI grantees. **Applicants are encouraged to develop a project web page within the first six months of the project as part of their dissemination activities.**

(C) Institutional Capability and Capacity Building:

- (1) Institutional Commitment and Capability. Demonstrate that the program administration is committed to the project and has the capability to ensure its completion. Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the applicant institution or the grant period. For example, substantiate that the institution attributes a high priority to the project, discuss how the project will contribute to the achievement of the institution's long-term (five- to ten-year) goals, explain how the project will help satisfy the institution's high-priority objectives, or show how this project is linked to and supported by the institution's strategic plan.
- (2) Institutional Resources. Document that the necessary institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials), and other appropriate resources, will be made available to the project. Demonstrate how the institutional resources to be made available to the project, when combined with the support requested from USDA, will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project.
- (3) Academic Enhancement. Document how this project will improve and strengthen teaching at the institution (including any partner institutions). Discuss how the benefits to be derived from the project will transcend the applicant institution or the grant period.
- (4) Continuation Plans. Discuss the likelihood of, or specific plans for, continuation or expansion of the project beyond the period of USDA support. For example, does the institution's long-range budget or academic plan provide for the realistic continuation or expansion of the initiative undertaken by this project after the end of the grant period, are plans for eventual self-support built into the project, are plans being made to institutionalize the program if it meets with success, and are there indications of other continuing non-Federal support?

(D) Key Personnel: Discuss the adequacy and specific attributes and project responsibilities of each key person associated with the project. Also include the background and qualifications of those personnel who will be responsible for assessing project results and administering the project evaluation and reporting process.

(E) Budget and Cost-effectiveness:

In addition to providing detailed information as part of the Budget Justification, include the following information as part of the Project Narrative:

- (1) Discuss how the budget specifically supports the proposed project activities. Explain how such budget items as professional or technical staff, travel, equipment, etc., are essential to achieving project objectives.
- (2) Justify that the total budget will be adequate to carry out the activities of the project.
- (3) Justify the project's cost-effectiveness. Show how the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale or leverages additional funds. For example, discuss how the project has the potential to generate a critical mass of expertise and activity focused on an Educational Need Area, or to promote coalition building that could lead to future ventures.
- (4) Include the percentage of time key personnel will work on the project, both during the academic year and summer. The salaries of university personnel (i.e. their total compensation) must not exceed the faculty member's regular annual compensation. In addition, the total commitment of time devoted to the project, when combined with time for teaching and research duties, other sponsored agreements, and other employment obligations to the institution, must not exceed 100 percent of the normal workload for which the employee is compensated, in accordance with established university policies and applicable Federal cost principles.
- (5) If the proposal addresses more than one Educational Need Area or Discipline (e.g., student experiential learning and instruction delivery systems), i.) state which one (primary) is most representative and list all the others in descending order of importance, and ii) estimate the proportion of the funds requested from USDA that will support each respective Need Area or Discipline. **Make sure you explain how the primary Educational Need Area (or Discipline) supports any of the six current USDA Strategic Goals or associated 17 CSREES Strategic Objectives (see Definitions, Part VIII, E., for complete list).**

c. Response to Previous Review (Field 11. on the Form).

This requirement only applies to "Resubmitted Applications." Part II, B., "Types of Applications" identifies the type of application(s) that may be submitted in response to this RFA. PDs must respond to the previous review panel summary on no more than one page titled

"RESPONSE TO PREVIOUS REVIEW." If desired, additional comments may be included in the text of the Project Narrative subject to the page limitations of that section.

d. Appendices to Project Narrative (Field 11. on the Form).

Applicants who wish to support developmental training for current faculty or administrators at Hispanic-Serving Institutions, should attach a three-page project prospectus that would address one or all the USDA Strategic Goals with the purpose of building capacity at Hispanic-Serving Institutions and fostering their linkages with USDA agencies.

2. Budget

Grantees are encouraged to obtain an independent evaluation to secure appropriate documentation of the project's outcomes and impacts. Up to 10 percent of grant funds may be used for this purpose.

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend a new Project Director's meeting and at least one national Project Directors' meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. Applicants should submit a budget request for Project Director(s) to travel to attend this meeting.

a. Budget Justification (Field K on the Form)

If an institution cannot accept Federal funds directly, it must attach a letter (as part of the Budget Justification) stating that it will accept the award, but that funds must be administered through a fiscal agent. This agent must be identified in the letter from the applicant and the letter must be countersigned by a representative of the fiscal agent organization. The letter should include the fiscal agent's point of contact, address, telephone number, fax number and e-mail address.

For Regular project applications with two institutions and Collaboration project applications, indicate how funds will be distributed to the participating institutions. Use the R&R Subaward Budget Attachment and attach as a separate file to indicate the names of the participating institutions with the amount(s) to be disbursed among them.

3. CSREES Supplemental Information Form

a. Program Code (Field 2. on the Form). Enter the program code name, 'Hispanic Serving Institutions Education Grants Program' and the program code, "NJ."

b. Conflict of Interest List (Field 4. on the Form). A conflict of interest list is not required under this program. Do not include a conflict of interest list.

**C. Submission Dates and Times**

**Instructions for submitting an application are included in Part IV, Section 1.9 of the CSREES Grants.gov Application Guide.**

Applications must be received by Grants.gov by COB on January 25, 2007 (5:00 p.m. Eastern Time). Applications received after this deadline will normally not be considered for funding.

The receipt of all applications will be acknowledged by e-mail. Therefore, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide accurate e-mail addresses, where designated, on the SF-424 R&R Application for Federal Assistance.

If the AR has not received a confirmation message from CSREES within 30 days of submission of the application, please contact the Program Contact identified in Part VII of the applicable RFA (for the Small Business Innovation Research program (SBIR) the Program Contacts are specified under subsection 1.5 of the SBIR Program Solicitation) and request the proposal number assigned to the application. **Failure to do so may result in (for competitive programs) the application not being considered for funding by the peer review panel or (for non-competitive programs) a delay in the issuance of an award. Once the application has been assigned a proposal number, this number should be cited on all future correspondence.**

## **D. Funding Restrictions**

### **1. Award Limitations**

For FY 2007, a lead institution may receive up to two awards.

### **2. Funding Limitations**

Please see Part II, C.3., Award Size, for maximum budget requests for regular or collaboration project applications. For FY 2007, there is no limitation on the amount of funding a single awardee may receive either as a lead institution, a cooperating institution, a subawardee or any combination thereof. The lead institution on a Collaboration Project must retain at least 25 percent and no more than 75 percent of the funds awarded.

### **3. Use of Funds for Facilities**

Under the Hispanic-Serving Institutions Education Grants Program, the use of grant funds to plan, acquire, or construct a building or facility is not allowed. With prior approval, in accordance with the cost principles set forth in OMB Circular No. A-21, some grant funds may be used for minor alterations, renovations, or repairs deemed necessary to retrofit existing teaching spaces in order to carry out a funded project. However, requests to use grant funds for such purposes must demonstrate that the alterations, renovations, or repairs are incidental to the major purpose for which a grant is issued.

### **4. Indirect Costs**

The FY 2006 Consolidated Appropriations Act limited indirect costs to 20 percent of the total Federal funds provided under each award. CSREES anticipates that the FY 2007 Appropriations Act will include a similar limitation. Therefore, when preparing budgets, applicants should limit their requests for recovery of indirect costs to the lesser of their institution's official negotiated indirect cost rate or the equivalent of 20 percent of total federal funds awarded. Another method of calculating the maximum allowable is 25 percent of the total direct costs. If no rate has been

negotiated, a reasonable dollar amount (equivalent to or less than 20 percent of total Federal funds requested) in lieu of indirect costs may be requested, subject to approval by USDA. This same indirect cost limitation applies to subcontracts.

Please note that if the 2007 Appropriations Act contains a different indirect cost limitation CSREES will contact each successful applicant to apply the correct rate prior to the award of a grant.

#### **E. Other Submission Requirements**

The applicant should follow the submission requirements noted in the document entitled “A Guide for Preparation and Submission of CSREES Applications via Grants.gov.”

## **PART V—APPLICATION REVIEW REQUIREMENTS**

### **A. General**

Each application will be evaluated in a 2-part process. First, each application will be screened to ensure that it meets the administrative requirements as set forth in this RFA. Second, applications that meet these requirements will be technically evaluated by a review panel.

Reviewers will be selected based upon training and experience in relevant scientific, extension, or education fields, taking into account the following factors: (a) The level of relevant formal scientific, technical education, or extension experience of the individual, as well as the extent to which an individual is engaged in relevant research, education, or extension activities; (b) the need to include as reviewers experts from various areas of specialization within relevant scientific, education, or extension fields; (c) the need to include as reviewers other experts (e.g., producers, range or forest managers/operators, and consumers) who can assess relevance of the applications to targeted audiences and to program needs; (d) the need to include as reviewers experts from a variety of organizational types (e.g., colleges, universities, industry, state and Federal agencies, private profit and non-profit organizations) and geographic locations; (e) the need to maintain a balanced composition of reviewers with regard to minority and female representation and an equitable age distribution; and (f) the need to include reviewers who can judge the effective usefulness to producers and the general public of each application

### **B. Evaluation Criteria**

The evaluation criteria below will be used in reviewing applications submitted in response to this RFA.

#### **1. Potential for Advancing Quality of Education; Significance of the Problem (30 points).**

This criterion is used to assess the likelihood that the project will have an impact upon and advance the quality of food and agricultural sciences by strengthening institutional capacities to meet clearly delineated needs. Elements considered include institutional long-range goals, CSREES/USDA's Strategic Goals and/or Objectives, identification of a problem or opportunity to be addressed, justification for the project, innovation, advancing educational equity, multidisciplinary and/or problem-based focus, and potential for adoption by other institutions.

#### **2. Proposed Approach and Cooperative Linkages (25 points).**

This criterion relates to the soundness of the proposed approach including objectives, methodology, plan of operation, timetable, expected products and results, evaluation, and dissemination plans. Emphasis is placed on the quality of educational or research support provided to the applicant institution through its partnerships and collaborative initiatives, and on the potential cooperative linkages likely to evolve as a result of this project.

### **3. Institutional Capability and Capacity Building (20 points).**

This criterion relates to the institution's capability to perform the project and the degree to which the project will strengthen its teaching or research capacity. Elements include the institution's commitment to the project, the adequacy of institutional resources (administrative, facilities, equipment, and/or materials) available to carry out the project, potential for academic or research enhancement, and plans for project continuation or expansion beyond the period of USDA support.

### **4. Key Personnel (15 points).**

This criterion relates to the adequacy of the number and qualifications of key persons who will develop and carry out the project, and the qualifications of project personnel who will provide for the assessment of project results and impacts and dissemination of these findings.

### **5. Budget and Cost-Effectiveness (10 points).**

This criterion relates to the extent to which the total budget adequately supports the project and is cost effective. Elements considered include the necessity and reasonableness of costs to carry out project activities and achieve project objectives; the appropriateness of budget allocations between the applicant and any collaborating institution(s); the adequacy of time committed to the project by key project personnel; and the degree to which the project maximizes the use of limited resources, optimizes educational value for the dollar, achieves economies of scale, and focuses expertise and activity on high-priority Educational Need Areas.

## **C. Conflicts of Interest and Confidentiality**

During the peer evaluation process, extreme care will be taken to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest that may impact review or evaluation. For the purpose of determining conflicts of interest, the academic and administrative autonomy of an institution shall be determined by reference to the current Higher Education Directory, published by Higher Education Publications, Inc., 6400 Arlington Boulevard, Suite 648, Falls Church, Virginia 22042. Phone: (703) 532-2300. Web site: <http://www.hepinc.com>.

Names of submitting institutions and individuals, as well as application content and peer evaluations, will be kept confidential, except to those involved in the review process, to the extent permitted by law. In addition, the identities of peer reviewers will remain confidential throughout the entire review process. Therefore, the names of the reviewers will not be released to applicants. At the end of the fiscal year, names of panelists will be made available in such a way that the panelists cannot be identified with the review of any particular application.

## **PART VI—AWARD ADMINISTRATION**

### **A. General**

Within the limit of funds available for such purpose, the awarding official of CSREES shall make grants to those responsible, eligible applicants whose applications are judged most meritorious under the procedures set forth in this RFA. The date specified by the awarding official of CSREES as the effective date of the grant shall be no later than September 30 of the Federal fiscal year in which the project is approved for support and funds are appropriated for such purpose, unless otherwise permitted by law. It should be noted that the project need not be initiated on the grant effective date, but as soon thereafter as practical so that project goals may be attained within the funded project period. All funds granted by CSREES under this RFA shall be expended solely for the purpose for which the funds are granted in accordance with the approved application and budget, the regulations, the terms and conditions of the award, the applicable Federal cost principles, and the Department's assistance regulations (parts 3015 and 3019 of 7 CFR).

### **B. Organizational Management Information**

Specific management information relating to an applicant shall be submitted on a one time basis, with updates on an as needed basis, as part of the responsibility determination prior to the award of a grant identified under this RFA, if such information has not been provided previously under this or another CSREES program. CSREES will provide copies of forms recommended for use in fulfilling these requirements as part of the preaward process. Although an applicant may be eligible based on its status as one of these entities, there are factors which may exclude an applicant from receiving Federal financial and nonfinancial assistance and benefits under this program (e.g., debarment or suspension of an individual involved or a determination that an applicant is not responsible based on submitted organizational management information).

### **C. Award Notice**

The award document will provide pertinent instructions and information including, at a minimum, the following:

- (1) Legal name and address of performing organization or institution to whom the Administrator has issued an award under the terms of this request for applications;
- (2) Title of project;
- (3) Name(s) and institution(s) of PDs chosen to direct and control approved activities;
- (4) Identifying award number assigned by the Department;
- (5) Project period, specifying the amount of time the Department intends to support the project without requiring recompetition for funds;
- (6) Total amount of Departmental financial assistance approved by the Administrator during the project period;

- (7) Legal authority(ies) under which the award is issued;
- (8) Appropriate Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) number;
- (9) Applicable award terms and conditions (see <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/awards/awardterms.html> to view CSREES award terms and conditions);
- (10) Approved budget plan for categorizing allocable project funds to accomplish the stated purpose of the award; and
- (11) Other information or provisions deemed necessary by CSREES to carry out its respective awarding activities or to accomplish the purpose of a particular award.

#### **D. Administrative and National Policy Requirements**

Several Federal statutes and regulations apply to grant applications considered for review and to project grants awarded under this program. These include, but are not limited to:

- 7 CFR Part 1, subpart A—USDA implementation of the Freedom of Information Act.
- 7 CFR Part 3—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-129 regarding debt collection.
- 7 CFR Part 15, subpart A—USDA implementation of Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended.
- 7 CFR Part 331 and 9 CFR Part 121—USDA implementation of the Agricultural Bioterrorism Protection Act of 2002.
- 7 CFR Part 3015—USDA Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, implementing OMB directives (i.e., OMB Circular Nos. A-21 and A-122, now codified at 2 CFR Parts 220 and 230) and incorporating provisions of 31 U.S.C. 6301-6308 (formerly the Federal Grant and Cooperative Agreement Act of 1977, Pub. L. No. 95-224), as well as general policy requirements applicable to recipients of Departmental financial assistance.
- 7 CFR Part 3017—USDA implementation of Governmentwide Debarment and Suspension (Nonprocurement) and 7 CFR Part 3021—Governmentwide Requirements for Drug Free Workplace (Grants).
- 7 CFR Part 3018—USDA implementation of Restrictions on Lobbying. Imposes prohibitions and requirements for disclosure and certification related to lobbying on recipients of Federal contracts, grants, cooperative agreements, and loans.
- 7 CFR Part 3019—USDA implementation of OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements With Institutions of Higher Education, Hospitals, and Other Nonprofit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3052—USDA implementation of OMB Circular No. A-133, Audits of States, Local Governments, and Non profit Organizations.

7 CFR Part 3407—CSREES procedures to implement the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended.

29 U.S.C. 794 (section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973) and 7 CFR Part 15b (USDA implementation of statute) —prohibiting discrimination based upon physical or mental handicap in Federally assisted programs.

35 U.S.C. 200 et seq. —Bayh Dole Act, controlling allocation of rights to inventions made by employees of small business firms and domestic nonprofit organizations, including universities, in Federally assisted programs (implementing regulations are contained in 37 CFR Part 401).

## **E. Expected Program Outputs and Reporting Requirements**

### **1. Project Directors Conferences**

During the tenure of a grant, Project Directors must attend a new Project Director's meeting and at least one national Project Directors' meeting, if offered, in Washington, DC, or any other announced location. The purpose of the new Project Director's meeting will be to discuss project and grant management, opportunities for collaborative efforts, and future directions for education reform. The national Project Director's meeting will build on the new Project Director's meeting and will also provide opportunities to enhance dissemination of exemplary end products/results.

### **2. Annual Performance Report**

An Annual Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the completion of the first year of the project and annually thereafter during the life of the grant. Generally, the Annual Performance Reports should include a summary of the overall progress toward project objectives, current problems or unusual developments, the next year's activities, and any other information that is pertinent to the ongoing project or which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award.

### **3. Final Performance Report**

A Final Performance Report must be submitted to the USDA program contact person within 90 days after the expiration date of the project. The expiration date is specified in the award documents and modifications thereto, if any. Generally, the Final Performance Report should be a summary of the completed project, including: a review of project objectives and accomplishments; a description of any products and outcomes resulting from the project; activities undertaken to disseminate products and outcomes; partnerships and collaborative ventures that resulted from the project; future initiatives that are planned as a result of the project; the impact of the project on the project director(s), students, the departments, the institution, and the food and agricultural sciences higher education system; and data on project personnel and beneficiaries. The Final Performance Report should be accompanied by samples or copies of any products or publications resulting from or developed by the project. The Final

Performance Report also must contain any other information which may be specified in the terms and conditions of the award and should include **an independent evaluation and appropriate documentation of the project's outcomes and impacts. Up to 10 percent of grant funds may be used for this purpose.**

#### **4. Current Research Information System (CRIS) Reports**

Grantees are required to submit initial project information and annual and summary reports to CSREES' Current Research Information System (CRIS). The CRIS database contains narrative project information, progress/impact statements, and final technical reports that are made available to the public. For applications recommended for funding, instructions on preparing and submission of project documentation will be provided to the applicant by the Agency Contact. Documentation must be submitted to CRIS before CSREES funds will be released. Project reports will be requested by the CRIS office when required. For more information about CRIS, visit <http://cris.csrees.usda.gov>.

#### **5. Other Reports**

Grantees should be aware that CSREES may, as a part of its own program evaluation activities, carry out in-depth evaluations of assisted activities. Thus, grantees should be prepared to cooperate with CSREES personnel, or persons retained by CSREES, in evaluating the institutional context and the impact of any supported project. Grantees may be asked to provide general information on any students and faculty supported, in whole or in part, by a grant awarded under this program; information that may be requested includes, but is not limited to, standardized academic achievement test scores, grade point average, academic standing, career patterns, age, race/ethnicity, gender, citizenship, and disability.

## **PART VII—AGENCY CONTACT**

Applicants and other interested parties are encouraged to contact Dr. Irma A. Lawrence; National Program Leader; Multicultural Alliances; Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service; USDA; 1400 Independence Ave., SW; STOP 2251; Washington, DC 20250-2251; telephone: (202) 720-2082; fax: (202) 720-4924; e-mail: [ilawrence@csrees.usda.gov](mailto:ilawrence@csrees.usda.gov).

## **PART VIII—OTHER INFORMATION**

### **A. Access to Review Information**

Copies of reviews, not including the identity of reviewers, and a summary of the panel comments will be sent to the applicant PD after the review process has been completed.

### **B. Use of Funds; Changes**

#### **1. Delegation of Fiscal Responsibility**

Unless the terms and conditions of the award state otherwise, the awardee may not in whole or in part delegate or transfer to another person, institution, or organization the responsibility for use or expenditure of award funds.

#### **2. Changes in Project Plans**

a. The permissible changes by the awardee, PD(s), or other key project personnel in the approved project shall be limited to changes in methodology, techniques, or other similar aspects of the project to expedite achievement of the project's approved goals. If the awardee or the PD(s) is uncertain as to whether a change complies with this provision, the question must be referred to the Authorized Departmental Officer (ADO) for a final determination. The ADO is the signatory of the award document, not the program contact.

b. Changes in approved goals or objectives shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes. In no event shall requests for such changes be approved which are outside the scope of the original approved project.

c. Changes in approved project leadership or the replacement or reassignment of other key project personnel shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such changes.

d. Transfers of actual performance of the substantive programmatic work in whole or in part and provisions for payment of funds, whether or not Federal funds are involved, shall be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to effecting such transfers, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of the award.

e. The project period may be extended by CSREES without additional financial support, for such additional period(s) as the ADO determines may be necessary to complete or fulfill the purposes of an approved project, but in no case shall the total project period exceed five years. Any extension of time shall be conditioned upon prior request by the awardee and approval in writing by the ADO, unless prescribed otherwise in the terms and conditions of award.

f. Changes in Approved Budget: Unless stated otherwise in the terms and conditions of award, changes in an approved budget must be requested by the awardee and approved in writing by the ADO prior to instituting such changes if the revision will involve transfers or expenditures of amounts requiring prior approval as set forth in the applicable Federal cost principles, Departmental regulations, or award.

### **C. Confidential Aspects of Applications and Awards**

When an application results in an award, it becomes a part of the record of CSREES transactions, available to the public upon specific request. Information that the Secretary determines to be of a confidential, privileged, or proprietary nature will be held in confidence to the extent permitted by law. Therefore, any information that the applicant wishes to have considered as confidential, privileged, or proprietary should be clearly marked within the application. The original copy of an application that does not result in an award will be retained by the Agency for a period of three years. Other copies will be destroyed. Such an application will be released only with the consent of the applicant or to the extent required by law. An application may be withdrawn at any time prior to the final action thereon.

### **D. Regulatory Information**

For the reasons set forth in the final Rule related Notice to 7 CFR part 3015, subpart V (48 FR 29114, June 24, 1983), this program is excluded from the scope of the Executive Order 12372 which requires intergovernmental consultation with State and local officials. Under the provisions of the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 (44 U.S.C. chapter 35), the collection of information requirements contained in this Notice have been approved under OMB Document No. 0524-0039.

### **E. Definitions**

For the purpose of this program, the following definitions are applicable:

Administrator means the Administrator of the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service (CSREES) and any other officer or employee of the Department to whom the authority involved is delegated.

Authorized departmental officer means the Secretary or any employee of the Department who has the authority to issue or modify grant instruments on behalf of the Secretary.

Authorized representative means the president, director, or chief executive officer or other designated official of the applicant organization who has the authority to commit the resources of the organization.

Budget period means the interval of time (usually 12 months) into which the project period is divided for budgetary and reporting purposes.

Citizen or national of the United States means: (1) A citizen or native resident of a State, the District of Columbia, or any Insular Area; or, (2) A person defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(22), who, though not a citizen of the United States, owes permanent allegiance to the United States. Where eligibility is claimed solely on the basis of permanent allegiance, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to CSREES upon request.

College or University means an educational institution in any State which:

- (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) provides an educational program for which an associate degree or any other higher degree is awarded;
- (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association.

Collaboration of Hispanic-Serving Institutions means a group of three or more Hispanic-Serving Institutions that have entered into a cooperative arrangement for the purpose of carrying out common objectives, or a public or private nonprofit agency, organization, or institution designated or created by a group of Hispanic-Serving Institutions for the purpose of carrying out common objectives on the group's behalf.

Department or USDA means the United States Department of Agriculture.

Education means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees.

Educational and general expenditures means the total amount expended by an institution for instruction, research, public service, academic support (including library expenditures), student services, institutional support, scholarships and fellowships, operation and maintenance expenditures for the physical plant, and any mandatory transfers that the institution is required to pay by law.

Educational Need Area means the specific area(s) of educational focus identified in the solicitation for applications and addressed by the applicant's proposal. Educational Need Areas are derived from statutory language authorizing the grants program and specific Educational Need Areas are targeted for funding support in the request for applications.

Eligible institution means an institution of higher education:

- (1) that has an enrollment of needy students as defined in this section;
- (2) except if waived by the Secretary of Education, the average educational and general expenditures of which are low, per full-time equivalent undergraduate student, in comparison with the average educational and general expenditures per full-time equivalent undergraduate student of institutions that offer similar instruction;
- (3) that is legally authorized to provide, and provides within the State, an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree; or that is a junior or community college as defined in this section;
- (4) that is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association determined by the Secretary of Education to be a reliable authority as to the

- quality of training offered or that is, according to such an agency or association, making reasonable progress toward accreditation;
- (5) that meets such other requirements as the Secretary of Education may prescribe; and
  - (6) that is located in a State.

The term eligible institution also applies to any branch of any institution of higher education, described by the definition of an eligible institution, that by itself satisfies the requirements contained in clauses (1) and (2) of the definition of an eligible institution.

For purposes of determining whether an institution is an eligible institution, the factor described under clause (1) of the definition of an eligible institution shall be given twice the weight of the factor described under clause (2) of the definition of an eligible institution.

Eligible participant means an individual who: (1) Is a citizen or national of the United States, as defined in this section; or (2) Is a citizen of the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, or the Republic of Palau. Where eligibility is claimed on the basis of owing permanent allegiance to the United States, documentary evidence from the Immigration and Naturalization Service as to such eligibility must be made available to USDA upon request.

Enrollment of needy students means an enrollment at an institution with respect to which:

- (1) at least 50 percent of the degree students so enrolled are receiving need-based assistance under title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001 *et seq.*) in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made (other than loans for which an interest subsidy is paid); or
- (2) a substantial percentage of the students so enrolled are receiving Federal Pell Grants in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which determination is made, compared to the percentage of students receiving Federal Pell Grants at all such institutions in the second fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the determination is made.

First generation college student means an individual both of whose parents did not complete a baccalaureate degree, or in the case of any individual who regularly resided with and received support from only one parent, an individual whose only such parent did not complete a baccalaureate degree.

Food and agricultural sciences means basic, applied, and developmental research, extension, and teaching activities in food and fiber, agricultural, renewable natural resources, forestry, and physical and social sciences, in the broadest sense of these terms, including but not limited to, activities relating to the production, processing, marketing, distribution, conservation, utilization, consumption, research, and development of food and agriculturally related products and services, and inclusive of programs in agriculture, natural resources, aquaculture, forestry, veterinary medicine, home economics, rural human ecology, rural economic, community, or business development, and closely allied disciplines.

Full-time equivalent students means the sum of the number of students enrolled full time at an institution, plus the full-time equivalent of the number of students enrolled part time (determined

on the basis of the quotient of the sum of the credit hours of all part-time students divided by 12) at such institution.

Grantee means the institution designated in the grant award document as the responsible legal entity to which a grant is awarded.

Hispanic-Serving Institution means an institution of higher education that:

- (1) is an eligible institution as defined in this section; and
- (2) at the time of application, has an enrollment of undergraduate full-time equivalent students that is at least 25 percent Hispanic students.

Institution of higher education means an educational institution in any State that:

- (1) admits as regular students only persons having a certificate of graduation from a school providing a secondary education, or the recognized equivalent of such a certificate;
- (2) is legally authorized within such State to provide a program of education beyond secondary education;
- (3) provides an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree or provides not less than a 2-year program that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree;
- (4) is a public or other nonprofit institution; and
- (5) is accredited by a nationally recognized accrediting agency or association, or if not so accredited, is an institution that has been granted preaccreditation status by such an agency or association that has been recognized by the Secretary of Education for the granting of preaccreditation status, and the Secretary of Education has determined that there is satisfactory assurance that the institution will meet the accreditation standards of such an agency or association within a reasonable time.

Insular Area means the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Palau, and the Virgin Islands of the United States.

Junior or community college means an institution of higher education that:

- (1) admits as regular students persons who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance in the State in which the institution is located and who have the ability to benefit from the training offered by the institution;
- (2) does not provide an educational program for which the institution awards a bachelor's degree (or an equivalent degree); and
- (3) provides an educational program of not less than 2 years in duration that is acceptable for full credit toward such a degree; or offers a 2-year program in engineering, mathematics, or the physical or biological sciences, designed to prepare a student to work as a technician or at the semiprofessional level in engineering, scientific, or other technological fields requiring the understanding and application of basic engineering, scientific, or mathematical principles of knowledge.

Low-income individual means an individual from a family whose taxable income for the preceding year did not exceed 150 percent of an amount equal to the poverty level determined by using criteria of poverty established by the Bureau of the Census.

Nonprofit as applied to a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution means a school, college, university, agency, organization, or institution owned and operated by one or more nonprofit corporations or associations, no part of the net earnings of which inures, or may lawfully inure, to the benefit of any private shareholder or individual.

Peer review panel means a group of experts or consultants, qualified by training and experience in particular fields of science, education, or technology to give expert advice on the merit of grant applications in such fields, who evaluate eligible proposals submitted to this program in their respective area(s) of expertise.

Plan of Work means a detailed, step-by-step description of how the applicant intends to accomplish the project's objectives. At a minimum, the Plan of Work should include a time line of major activities to be undertaken, descriptions of protocols and procedures to be followed, an explanation of how resources will be acquired and used, and an outline of the qualifications and responsibilities of all key project personnel.

Prior approval means written approval evidencing prior consent by an authorized departmental officer as defined in this section.

Private sector means all non-public entities, including for-profit and non-profit commercial and non-commercial entities, and including private or independent educational institutions.

Project means the particular activity within the scope of one or more of the educational need areas targeted for support by a grant awarded under this program.

Project director means the single individual designated by the grantee in the grant application and approved by the Secretary who is responsible for the direction and management of the project.

Project period means the period, as stated in the award document and modifications thereto, if any, during which Federal sponsorship begins and ends.

Regular project proposal means a proposal for a project: (1) where the applicant institution will be the sole entity involved in the execution of the project; or (2) which will involve the applicant institution and one other entity, but where the involvement of the other entity does not meet the requirements for a Collaboration project proposal as defined in this section.

Secretary means the Secretary of Agriculture and any other officer or employee of the Department of Agriculture to whom the authority involved may be delegated.

State means any one of the fifty States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

Teaching means formal classroom instruction, laboratory instruction, and practicum experience in the food and agricultural sciences and matters related thereto (such as faculty development, student recruitment and services, curriculum development, instructional materials and equipment, and innovative teaching methodologies) conducted by colleges and universities offering associate, baccalaureate, or higher degrees.

Units of State government means all state institutions, including the formal divisions of State government (i.e., the official state agencies such as departments of transportation and education), local government agencies (e.g., a county human services office), and including individual state educational institutions (e.g., public colleges and universities).

United States means the several States, the territories and possessions of the United States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas, the Virgin Islands of the United States, and the District of Columbia.

USDA Strategic Goals and CSREES Strategic Objectives (FY 2004-2009)

Strategic Goal 1: *Enhance International Competitiveness of American Agriculture*

Objective 1.1: Expand and maintain international export opportunities

Objective 1.2: Support international economic development and trade capacity building

Objective 1.3: Improved sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) system to facilitate agricultural trade

Strategic Goal 2: *Enhance the Competitiveness and Sustainability of Rural Farm Economies*

Objective 2.1: Expand domestic market opportunities

Objective 2.2: Increase the efficiency of domestic agricultural production and marketing systems

Objective 2.3: Provide risk management and financial tools to farmers and ranchers

Strategic Goal 3: *Support Increased Economic Opportunities and Improved Quality of Life in Rural America*

Objective 3.1: Expand economic opportunities by using USDA financial resources to leverage private sector resources and create opportunities for growth

Objective 3.2: Improve the quality of life through USDA financing of quality housing, modern utilities, and needed community facilities

Strategic Goal 4: *Enhance Protection and Safety of the Nation's Agriculture and Food Supply*

Objective 4.1: Reduce the incidence of foodborne illnesses related to meat, poultry, and egg products in the U. S.

Objective 4.2: Reduce the number and severity of agricultural pest and disease outbreaks

Strategic Goal 5: *Improve the Nation's Nutrition and Health*

Objective 5.1: Ensure access to nutritious food

Objective 5.2: Promote healthier eating habits and lifestyles

Objective 5.3: Improve nutrition assistance, program management and customer service

Strategic Goal 6: *Protect and Enhance the Nation's Natural Resource Base and Environment*

Objective 6.1: Protect watershed health to ensure clean and abundant water

Objective 6.2: Enhance soil quality to maintain productive working cropland

Objective 6.3: Protect forests and grasslands

Objective 6.4: Protect and enhance wildlife habitat to the benefit desired, at-risk and declining species

## **F. CSREES' Grants.gov Implementation Plans**

CSREES is continuing to develop its capacity to exchange proposal and grant data electronically with its grantees through [Grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and to process, review, and award proposals and grants electronically.

In Fiscal Year (FY) 2006, CSREES offered an electronic application option for select grant programs and partnered with five institutions to use Grants.gov Apply. CSREES utilized the SF-424 R&R (Research and Related) forms package (see 70 FR 9656, published in the Federal Register on February 28, 2005) along with CSREES Agency-specific forms and instructions to receive the electronic applications. These pilot activities were successful and provided lessons for applicants and CSREES.

As a result, for the FY 2007 (October 1, 2006-September 30, 2007) cycle, CSREES is requiring electronic submission through Grants.gov for some programs while providing a Grants.gov option for others. Please visit <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/fy07changes.html> for information about FY 2007 submission requirements by program. For more information about CSREES' Grants.gov plans, including important announcements, program implementation, and detailed requirements, see the CSREES' web site, [http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other\\_links/egov/egov.html](http://www.csrees.usda.gov/business/other_links/egov/egov.html). The information on these web sites will be updated as appropriate. It is suggested that the sites be visited periodically for important updates.

## **G. DUNS Number**

A Dun and Bradstreet (D&B) Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number is a unique nine-digit sequence recognized as the universal standard for identifying and keeping track of over 70 million businesses worldwide. A Federal Register notice of final policy issuance (68 FR 38402) requires a DUNS number in every application (i.e., hard copy and electronic) for a grant or cooperative agreement (except applications from individuals) submitted on or after October 1, 2003. Therefore, potential applicants should verify that they have a DUNS number or take the steps needed to obtain one. For information about how to obtain a DUNS number go to <http://www.grants.gov/RequestaDUNS>. Please note that the registration may take up to 14 business days to complete.